



National Security Brief | Précis sur la sécurité nationale

Anti-Public Health Measures Movement, Grievances and the Freedom Convoy 2022

Freedom of expression is constitutionally protected in Canada; CSIS investigative thresholds may be met once a threat actor facilitates or advocates for serious violence in support or furtherance of ideological, political or religious objectives with the intent of affecting societal change. CSIS does not investigate lawful advocacy, protest or dissent, unless it is carried out in conjunction with any of the activities outlined in paragraphs 2(a) to (d) of the *CSIS Act*.

CSIS is not investigating the activities of the Freedom Convoy 2022 except within the context of the actions of our subjects of investigation.

In response to Government of Canada's federal vaccine mandate requiring all truck drivers crossing the border to be fully vaccinated as of January 15, 2022, a national event entitled "Freedom Convoy 2022" was launched via a social media fundraiser, with the goal of scaling back and ultimately eliminating COVID-19 mandate measures. CSIS assesses that the convoy is part of the broader anti-public health restrictions movement. The Ottawa occupation is comprised of groups (primarily those belonging to the Freedom Convoy), networks and individuals. It has received extensive support online from a range of individuals, networks and platforms. As with any movement, only a small fringe element supports the use of violence or might be willing to engage in it.

Assessment

While broadly united in their opposition to public health measures that have been imposed in response to COVID-19 and their strong dislike for Prime Minister Justin Trudeau – and the federal government in general, the protesters are not homogeneous in either their grievances or organization. In fact, protesters espouse a range of

Defining a Movement in the IMVE Space

A movement is a loosely organized collection of threat actors (including individuals) who are linked by dense informal networks—both online and offline—and who share a distinct collective identity. A movement exists in conflictual relationship (including the possible use of serious violence) with clearly identified opponents; its goal is to carry out, resist, or undo social change. Movements tend to mobilize outside established political or institutional channels.

A movement does not have a formal or legitimate leader; rather, it is guided purposefully and strategically by its members. Beyond the culture created by the movement, a collective call to action emerges through its followers.

A movement is the coming together of individuals; it is generally not governed by the procedures or structures of a particular group. There is no standard typology of social movements; instead, movements collectively seek to evoke social change, through either legal or illegal tactics.

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grievances, often intertwined with conspiracy theories, in support of their opposition to public health measures.

The Freedom Convoy 2022 provides an opportunity for those with disparate grievances to unify against a perceived common foe (often referred to by academics as 'the other') for a specific cause (i.e. support for truckers). The majority of the participants likely have little to no connection to the trucking industry, but merely view the protest as an opportunity to voice their own personal and ideological grievances.

Impacts related to the COVID-19 pandemic have resulted in severe social, economic and psychological effects on individuals and families across a wide spectrum of the Canadian population. Some have developed a range of perceived and real grievances that have been motivated by a sense of loss, humiliation, anger and blame, due primarily to underlying factors (e.g. mental health, ideological beliefs and economic situation).

No formal organized plot of violence has been identified. s.38

s.38

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CSIS assesses

that the Freedom Convoy 2022 is of interest to various subjects of investigation, especially those who hold anti-mandate and/or broader anti-government views.

The Freedom Convoy 2022 has developed numerous funding streams including the \$10+ million on GoFundMe (which was ultimately cancelled). CSIS is unaware of any hostile state funding of the convoy. s.38

Outlook

As the occupation continues and frustrations, anxiety and tension increase, it is possible that an individual or small group of individuals may be willing to engage in violence.

CSIS' mandate is to assess and possibly investigate individuals based on the potential for serious violence based on ideological, political or religious beliefs.

CSIS will continue to monitor the involvement of IMVE's within the Freedom Convoy 2022 in order to better understand the anti-public health measures movement.

Further, CSIS will also continue to follow the evolving and dynamic situation surrounding the Freedom Convoy 2022 to identify any potential national security concerns.

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